**April 13, 2022**

**BIBLE STUDY**

**Refuge Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.**

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**“WAR AND PEACE”**

**James 4:1-6**

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***James 4:1 "From whence [come] wars and fightings among you? [come they] not hence, [even] of your lusts that war in your members?"***

Chapter three ended in a statement of Christian Maturity and Humility by stressing the peace that results from heavenly wisdom. Now James emphasizes the strife so common among his readers, stemming from their unsatisfied, selfish desires. Instead of wrestling with God in prayer, these believers are striving with one another. You can’t have peace if you’re constantly at war. According to James, his readers engaged in fights among themselves. What caused them? What was the source? Ask people why they’re fighting, and they’re likely to point their fingers at others. But James insists that wars come from your passions that wage war within you. Conflicts emerge from within.

***James 3:18 “And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”***

In this chapter, James questions his readers engaged in wars and fights among themselves. This is an indication of their lack of Christian maturity. You can’t have the peace of God or peace with God if you’re constantly at war with yourself and others. What caused them? What was the source? Ask people why they’re fighting, and they’re likely to point their fingers at others. But James insists that wars come from your passions that wage war within you. Conflicts emerge from within. The strongest statement someone can make is usually in the form of a question. It’s called the Socratic method of teaching. It gets us to thinking about figuring out what the problem is. James is speaking to them about the fighting’s (internal conflict) being caused, because of the immaturity and worldliness they still have in their lives and their walks. If we are dead in Christ, there should be no reason to fight ourselves or the brethren.

***Hebrews 12:14 “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:”***

***John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”***

***James 4:2 "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not."***

***James 4:3 "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume [it] upon your lusts."***

The human heart manufactures desires, frequently selfish ones. These can range from the mundane (“I want a little peace and quiet”) to the weighty (“I want power and significance”). When someone prevents you from satisfying a desire, you are tempted to view that person as an obstacle to be overcome, as an enemy to be defeated. Therefore, the natural tendency is to murder and covet. It’s not necessarily that you intend to slay anyone physically. Jesus, after all, reminds us that murder begins in the heart with hatred.

***Matthew 15:19 “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:”***

***1 John 2:16 “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”***

Thus, the believers James addressed were relating to one another as adversaries. Importantly, James says one of the reasons they did not have what they wanted was because they didn’t ask. How tragic to declare war against a friend or spouse about something that God may have granted if only asked! On the other hand, often it’s the asking that’s the problem. Many people don’t receive what they want from God because they ask with wrong motives, so they may spend it on their pleasures. The kingdom of God and the needs of others don’t factor into the equation. A helpful question to pose when we pray about something for ourselves is this: “How will God’s program be advanced through the granting of my request?”

***Psalm 19:14 “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.”***

James is speaking here to believers in Christ. It is paradoxical that Christians would be this caught up in the flesh. Lust is of the flesh, and not of God. It seems they want things so badly that are not their own, that they even kill to get them. They have not crucified the flesh and its lust.

***Romans 7:15-22***

***15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.***

***16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.***

***17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.***

***18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.***

***19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.***

***20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.***

***21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.***

***22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:***

James gives them the secret in the last few words of the verse. Christians, do not fight to get the things you want, pray for them instead. If they are good for you, the Lord will give them to you. The answer is prayer. They do not have these things, because they have not asked in prayer. Sometimes we, like these Christians, pray for things that would not be for our own good, or the good of those around us. God will not answer a prayer to fill our greed. He will, however, answer a prayer for our needs.

***James 4:4 "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."***

As Israel was a spiritual adulteress, unfaithful to God, so the church is a spiritual adulteress when she is the unfaithful bride of Christ (Hosea 2:5, 19, 20; Matthew 12:39). One cannot be both a lover of God and a lover of the world. Adultery is one of the worst sins a Christian could commit, because it is a sin of the body. The Christian, filled with the Holy Spirit, would be involving the Holy Spirit in the sin. A person who is still involved in adultery, is not a friend of God. They have chosen the way of the flesh. The flesh, or the spirit, rules over our will. If the flesh rules over your will, you are of the flesh. When we want the satisfaction of our own desires above all else, we commit idolatry and worship something other than God. Worldliness and godliness cannot coexist. When Israel strayed after other gods, the Lord accused them of adultery because he was Israel’s husband.

***Jeremiah 3:8 “And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.”***

Therefore, it’s not surprising that James calls these church member’s adulterous people. The church is the bride of Christ. So, friendship with the world is hostility toward God. If you cozy up to the world and pursue worldly desires, you make yourself the enemy of God. And when you put yourself in that position, you cannot expect your prayers to be answered.

***Ephesians 5:22-23***

***22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.***

***23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.***

***James 4:5 "Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?"***

***James 4:6 "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."***

God wants you. If you commit adultery with the world, then, he won’t sit back and do nothing. The Holy Spirit who dwells in us envies intensely. The Lord is a jealous God who won’t share his bride with false gods.

***II Corinthians 11:2 "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present [you as] a chaste virgin to Christ."***

So, what does a holy, jealous God do when his people foolishly pursue the world and treat him like an enemy? He gives you more grace! When we humble ourselves before God, we are in a place to receive from Him.

***I Peter 5:6 "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"***

We are saved by the grace of God, and we have nothing to be proud about. Salvation for us is a free gift. His grace is sufficient for me. God resists the proud. If you place yourself in opposition to God through your attachment to the world, he’ll resist you. He’ll oppose you because such pride imitates the king of pride, Satan, who exalted himself above God.

***Isaiah 14:12-14***

***12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!***

***13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:***

***14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.***

The only solution is to humble yourself before him in order to experience the outpouring of his grace. Pride is like a beard. It grows without our cultivation, and we have to daily, humbly shave it off. God will not share you with any other. You are either 100% His, or you are not His at all. To lust with envy would not be Godly. We must choose today whom we will serve. Is it God, or the fleshly lust, that we serve? If we are God's, we will not lust with envy. Although many believe that verse 5 refers to the positive ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit, yearning jealously over the believer, the tenor of verses 4 and 5 is negative, speaking of man’s envy. The good work of God begins at verse 6 in contrast to 4 and 5 as the conjunction indicates. But he giveth more grace is literally “greater grace”. God gives grace that is greater than the world’s attraction of verse 4 and the inner lust of verse 5, and so can withstand both.

***Romans 5:20 “Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:”***

**QUESTIONS**

1. What caused the fightings among them?
2. Ye have not, because ye \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_.
3. Lust is of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and not of God.
4. Instead of fighting for what we want, we should do what?
5. In verse 3, they ask \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. God will not answer a prayer to fill our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
7. Friendship of the world is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with God.
8. Why is adultery such a terrible sin for a Christian.
9. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, rules over the will.
10. What percentage of you must the Lord have?
11. God resisteth the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but giveth grace to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.